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President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 11 and 53 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

Questions of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): First, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for having introduced this report to the General Assembly covering the period from 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Motoc and the delegation of Romania for drafting the report. I would, in addition, like to extend a word of recognition to the Secretariat for providing support in the preparation of the document.

The submission of an annual report by the Security Council to the General Assembly in accordance with the relevant articles of the United Nations Charter is a practice that flows from the fact that the Council was entrusted by Members with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and it acts on their behalf in that regard. Reporting is a practice that promotes accountability, as it allows the wider United Nations membership to discuss and assess the Council's achievements and failures, its shortcomings and working methods.

As the present report shows, the agenda of the Security Council has become increasingly complex, going far beyond classic situations of inter-State conflict or even of struggles at the domestic level that are likely to endanger international peace and security. That trend, which has been apparent for the past 15 years, is ever more pronounced nowadays. The Security Council currently deals with a variety of issues such as post-conflict peace-building, economic reconstruction, promotion of justice and the rule of law, national reconciliation, activities related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, conflict prevention, the fight against terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, among others. Today the Council's active agenda consists of more than 70 items. Some of them are new, while others have been before the Council for decades. The difficulty in securing peace and security stands as a grim reminder of the limitations that are presently inherent in the Council's work and structure.

The nature and volume of those issues are leading the Council to alter, even revise, its procedures, methods and tools. Meetings are held every day, sometimes concurrently, as happened this morning, yet the Council's monthly programme of work does not seem to allow for all issues under consideration to be discussed with the necessary time and in-depth analysis they require.

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Such developments take place against the backdrop of what we believe is a disturbing tendency to apply a range of explicit enforcement provisions under Chapter VII not only to actual threats to international peace and security, but also to potential ones. Moreover, increasingly loose reference to Chapter VII has led to its becoming a conceptual umbrella for issues not directly related to security, and has even led to situations in which the Security Council might potentially interfere with the legal and political prerogative of States, such as treaty-making. That is not, in our view, the most judicious use of provisions intended to be used as a last resort, whose implementation should result from thorough assessment grounded in sound criteria and sound political judgement.

The Council should not allow ambiguities to seep into its resolutions and its decisions; nor should it tacitly permit profuse resort to Chapter VII, which could negatively affect multilateral efforts aimed at promoting collective action with a focus on cooperation. Indeed, cooperation is clearly a legitimate approach that, even in crucial cases, may have greater potential for effectiveness.

As a current non-permanent member of the Council, Brazil has itself been directly confronted with questions that stem from today's challenging agenda, and we are actively engaged in finding specific, precise responses. It seems clear to us that, in many contemporary conflicts, action aimed at restoring peace and security must be combined with measures that promote social and economic development. Considerations such as these have been guiding the Brazilian approach to many issues related to conflicts being considered by the Council.

For instance, with regard to Haiti — which unfortunately had to be reintroduced into the agenda less than a decade after an earlier involvement by the Council — Brazil has supported the idea of engaging the international community, together with the authorities in Port-au-Prince, in designing a long-term development strategy aimed at achieving long-term stability and combating poverty, thus facilitating peace and democracy in that country.

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, we joined an initiative involving the Economic and Social Council and international financial institutions that seek to work with the transitional Government to create conditions for national growth and prosperity. The initiative is an effort to prevent social and economic strife from degenerating into yet another West African conflict of major dimensions.

A third case in point is Timor-Leste, where we have actively urged the Council to continue to provide the new nation with the support it needs in order to consolidate the institutions that are essential to secure a future of stability and prosperity. That would help to ensure that the international community's peace and security investment in that country and other efforts there are not wasted.

Sustaining such interdisciplinary action — which in many ways is also innovative — requires not only increased attention by the Council but also frequent and fluid interaction on the part of the Council with other main organs of the United Nations, as well as broader participation by the membership. Brazil is of the view that both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council can do much to contribute to the adequate assessment of, and effective response to, the multidisciplinary challenges with which the Security Council is currently confronted. I need not stress that the United Nations Charter already clearly provides for such institutional partnerships, as in Article 12, paragraph 1, concerning the General Assembly, and in Article 65, with respect to the Economic and Social Council. We also welcome regular meetings among the Presidents of the main bodies of the United Nations system.

The practice of holding frequent open debates and public meetings is highly useful, as it allows the Council to devote attention to a broad spectrum of opinion on the issues before it and, in fact, enhances the quality of the Council's deliberations. In addition, briefings by the presidency in meetings with troop-contributing countries, besides promoting transparency and accountability, add greater focus to those deliberations.

In the context of the reform exercise, we should explore all such possibilities to the fullest in order to provide greater leverage to the United Nations system as a whole in addressing contemporary challenges.

The current session of the General Assembly promises to be crucial for the adoption of decisions regarding the reform of the Organization aimed at better equipping it to deal with the growing threats and challenges that characterize present-day international

reality. In that effort, reform of the Security Council is a task that should no longer be put off. For many years, a decision on that issue has eluded us, as not enough progress has been made within the framework of its consideration by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Based on a shared conception of the need for fundamental reform in the composition of the Security Council, my Government recently joined Germany, India and Japan in expressing joint support for reform that meets the expectations of the majority of Members of the Organization. We will work together with other like-minded Member States towards meaningful reform of the United Nations, including that relating to the composition of the Security Council. We are convinced that Africa must be represented in the permanent membership of the Security Council, and we welcome the presentation of candidatures of countries from that region for a permanent seat.

The question of United Nations reform — particularly the need for the Security Council to become more representative, legitimate and effective — has, in effect, acquired unparalleled relevance and urgency for most Members of the United Nations. In this session's general debate, 148 out of the 190 representatives who took the floor expressed their views on these issues. In that regard, my Government wishes to take this opportunity to express its heartfelt recognition and appreciation to all those who have manifested — on that occasion and at today's meeting — the support of their countries for a Brazilian permanent membership in an expanded Security Council.

On the basis of the perceived need to bring the United Nations and its principal organs up to date with current international realities, the Secretary-General established the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. Its findings and recommendations will be available by the end of this year. Last week, during the debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), I had the opportunity to express my Government's broad expectations with regard to the work of the Panel. On that occasion, I stressed the importance of not considering the threats and challenges facing the Organization strictly from a perspective of coercion and the use of force; of putting forward recommendations aimed at strengthening not only the Security Council, but also the other principal organs of the United Nations; and of avoiding the expansion of the scope of Security Council action in a manner that would interfere with the mandated functions of the other main bodies. I also emphasized the need not to mistake the increased activity of the Council in recent years for a sign that that body is functioning well. Such activity is rather evidence of the increasingly fragile foundations of international peace and security. Finally, I stress the need to heed the call of the international community for greater multilateralism.

Now, I wish to add a few remarks that pertain specifically to the reform of the Security Council. First, it is necessary to take into account adequately the expectations of the Member States. It is certainly significant that more than half of the 148 Member States that referred to the issue of reform of the Security Council during the general debate explicitly put forward the view that the Council should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent member categories. Secondly, and no less significantly, only five countries expressed a preference for a partial, more limited kind of Council expansion.

Thirdly, nearly all of those Members that defended an expansion in both categories were of the opinion that there should be new permanent seats for developing countries, some of which, including my own, were specifically mentioned, as I noted earlier.

The views of Brazil on the issue of the reform of the Security Council are today shared by many and come as no surprise. The Security Council must be strengthened and made more representative and legitimate. Its composition, in particular as concerns its permanent membership, can not remain unaltered. It can no longer ignore the emergence on the international scene of developing countries that have become important actors, both regionally and globally and often exercise a critical role in promoting the pacific settlement of disputes.

We must also incorporate, on a permanent basis, countries that have the will and the capacity to take on major responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. In short, better representation confers greater legitimacy, and greater legitimacy increases the efficiency and efficacy of the work of the Council.

On the basis of those considerations, Brazil is ready to work, through the intergovernmental process and together with our partners and the wider membership, in a common effort to make the Organization a better reflection of its Members' aspirations for a more peaceful and just world. It is a task that is pressing on us now and must be accomplished.

Mr. Requeijol Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the third time that a brief analytic summary is included in the annual report which, although still insufficient, marks a step forward towards the objective of having truly substantive reports on the work of the Security Council.

Without disregarding the value of the current report as part of the Council's institutional memory, we still hope for a text with greater analytical content, which presents the political and legal grounds of, at least, the most important decisions the Council adopts.

We believe such a report should reflect not only what has been done, but also what has not been achieved and the reasons why this has occurred, particularly in cases where the Council has failed to act or when it has visibly lacked unity. Thus, there must be more analytical details on divided votes, especially in those cases where a negative vote of one of its permanent members was recorded. For instance, during the term under consideration, the veto was exercised on four occasions; three of them involved the United States voting against draft resolutions on the Palestinian question.

As long as the Council does not succeed in changing its current practices, its annual report should comprise detailed information on the discussions carried out in closed meetings, including the diverging opinions Council members may have on given issues.

Due to the limitations still characterizing the annual report, the only meagre means available at the moment to obtain bits of information concerning closed meetings are the informal briefing meetings, which are carried out by the rotating presidency and are of varying quality and consistency, and that presidency's subsequent monthly assessment.

The General Assembly still does not receive the special reports which, under the Charter, the Council should submit when necessary. During the current term, we have also seen actions and omissions by the Council that would have merited the preparation of a special report to the Assembly, which would have contributed to promoting the active interrelation between both bodies that we all hope for. The Assembly would then be able to formulate useful recommendations for the work of the Council.

In that sense, we consider vital the full implementation of relevant resolutions adopted by this Assembly, for instance, resolutions 51/193 and 58/126; the latter contains provisions in its section A referring not only to the quality of the Council's annual report, but also to a follow-up to the results of the debate we are having today.

We reiterate that our demands do not represent simple academic curiosity, but the fact that Member States represented in the Assembly have the legitimate right to expect appropriate accountability from the body, of limited composition, to which we have entrusted the prime responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security and which, pursuant to the Charter, acts on behalf of all Member States.

There will not be true reform of the United Nations without reform of the Security Council, a body where the principle of sovereign equality is institutionally and flagrantly violated on a daily basis.

The rule of international law cannot be re-established, particularly that of the Charter, nor can there be democracy within this Organization as long as the Council exercises totalitarian power. It is also true that Council members, including the permanent members, also endure the dictatorship of the super-Power established by the strength of arms and money.

It is well known that the veto was the reflection of an international balance that does not even exist today, and Member States, with few exceptions, agree that the veto must be eliminated.

However, the essential fact is not so much the legal aspect of the veto but mainly the powerful forces that suppress the other permanent and non-permanent members and Member States. Such forces govern the essential processes of the world economy, finance, military supremacy and also the precarious and temporary equilibria; the same correlations that hamper the exercise of the physical majority of the non-permanent members also prevent the General Assembly from regaining the powerful functions entrusted to it by the United Nations Charter, given the

political, military and financial realities of this era. Until such time as the elimination of the veto is achieved, its use should be limited to Chapter VII of the Charter, as a first step towards that aim.

The Security Council should be broadened to include new permanent and non-permanent members. New permanent and non-permanent posts — created in the Council as part of its broadening — should be entrusted with the same prerogatives as the current members have.

The objective of the enlargement should be to correct the insufficient representation of developing countries. Two or three developing countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, two or three from Africa and two or three developing countries from Asia should join as permanent members, with the same prerogatives of those currently possessing them, including the veto.

As stated by the Non-Aligned Movement, if agreement is not reached in other categories, at least the number of non-permanent members should be increased for the time being. Greater transparency in the work of the Security Council is an urgent matter. Decisions taken within that body have ever-increasing direct or indirect implications on all Member States, in an increasingly interdependent world. Furthermore, many of these decisions, when carried out, should be financed by all Member States, and not only by those taking such decisions.

The annual report of the Security Council should include more illustrative statistics, including percentages, on the number of public meetings and consultations of the whole and the time devoted to them. This would provide us with more detailed information for debate in the General Assembly and give us a deeper understanding of why the Security Council still continues to do the majority of its work behind closed doors, despite the fact that this not only contravenes the Council's rules of procedure but has also been emphatically and repeatedly qualified as unacceptable by most Member States.

It is not only necessary to increase the number of open meetings, but also to turn them into genuine opportunities to properly take into account the opinions and contributions of States who are not members of the Council. Similarly, it would be useful to establish minimum briefing requirements for the monthly reports of the Council President.

Overcoming secrecy in the work of the Council would allow our Governments to obtain the information they need to make timely policy decisions. In this context, we would like to thank those members of the Council, especially countries belonging to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Non-Aligned Movement caucus, which have undertaken specific efforts to keep us as well informed as possible on the work of the Council.

The Security Council also violates both the spirit and letter of the Charter through an increasingly voracious and intrusive agenda which usurps the functions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The adoption of resolution 1540 (2004) is a clear example of this and of the interest on the part of certain States in transforming the Council into a body that adopts texts which, in practice, are similar in scope to international treaties. We consider that international legal obligations, including those related to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, should not be legislated for all Member States without their full participation and sovereign acceptance through their signature and ratification of relevant treaties and agreements that have been negotiated multilaterally.

While the Security Council oversteps its remit on certain issues, on others it succumbs to stalemate, such as we see regarding the situation of the occupied Palestinian territories, and this is a matter of concern.

Furthermore, there is no logical explanation for the fact that the Council's rules of procedure continue to be provisional after so many years of being in force, and that it has not been amended for more than 20 years.

Finally, we consider that the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council should continue to work with renewed energy.

Mr. Balestra (San Marino): Like previous speakers, San Marino wishes to make its contribution to the discussion of item 53 on the General Assembly's agenda, concerning the question of equitable representation on, and increased membership of, the Security Council and related matters. We want to thank Ambassadors Wenaweser and Gallegos for the excellent work they have done.

The Security Council was created as an instrument to prevent and remove international threats and to ensure peace and security. This body is still the only one that can authorize the collective use of force, and for this reason it must be representative, responsible, efficient and, most importantly, capable of adapting to the new challenges that the international community faces. For this reason, an increase in Security Council membership is necessary but must be carefully thought out.

Some delegations have expressed their concern regarding the fact that the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform has not yet obtained results despite many years of intensive activity. There is here an implicit criticism which, in my view, seems to be directed at a group of countries whose only fault lies in having opposed the ways and means of reforming the Council, as proposed by another group of countries. The international community bears common responsibility for its lack of readiness to take a decision on this extremely sensitive matter; this state of affairs reveals the danger of instituting reforms which do not meet international standards of democracy and fairness.

San Marino is convinced that a decision on the enlargement of the Security Council, to be effective, must be made on the basis of consensus, or at least general agreement.

Reiterating what my country's Foreign Minister, Mr. Fabio Berardi, stated during the general debate, San Marino favours an increase in the number of non-permanent members as appropriate. Such an enlargement would ensure greater participation by all countries in the Security Council, with more equitable geographical representation through democratic elections in the General Assembly.

The contribution of a State to the work of the Security Council consists not only in its participation in the Council, but also in the expression of its preferences for the most qualified candidates to serve on the Council in a particular period of history, which it does when electing them in the General Assembly. Seventy-eight Member States of this Organization have never served in the Security Council. For those countries, participation in the democratic process of electing members to the Security Council is a most important and valuable contribution which they bring to the work of the Security Council.

The extension of the privileges of permanent membership to other countries would mean creating additional injustice, discrimination and inequality. San Marino is in favour of gradually restricting the right of veto, with a view to its eventual elimination. The veto is a vestige of the past, which grew out of specific circumstances that are no longer present. This anachronism should be limited and discouraged. We believe that the majority agrees on the fact that the use of the veto should be limited to Chapter VII matters and that it should be subject to further limitations such as its suspension, banning the use of the single veto, and prohibiting the use of the veto on questions of reform. We consider it extremely important for permanent members to have the ability to cast negative votes on draft resolutions without vetoing them and we deem it indispensable to introduce the concept of accountability with regard to the veto.

San Marino awaits the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We are confident that the Panel will take into consideration all the above-mentioned aspects of reform in its deliberations. We look forward to availing ourselves of those deliberations as additional food for thought in the discussions of the Assembly's Working Group.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council on its work. I would also like to thank the former President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, as well as Ambassador Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Ambassador Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein, for their efforts in reinvigorating the discussion in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

The United Nations is confronted with new threats, such as internal violence, poverty, infectious diseases, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the inter-State conflicts that the United Nations Charter was originally intended to address.

The Japanese Government regards Security Council reform, which is an initiative to bring the Council in line with the realities of international

politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the central issue of United Nations reform. This is because the Security Council, as an organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must be able to address the aforementioned issues effectively.

The establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change represents an effort by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to improve the United Nations system for addressing those challenges. Along with the work of the High-level Panel, serious discussions have also being going on among United Nations Member States, particularly on the subject of Security Council reform, since the Council must play the central role in matters related to international peace and security.

Japan's position on Security Council reform, as Prime Minister Koizumi stated in the general debate at the 4th plenary meeting, is that, in order for the Council to effectively address its new threats and challenges, countries with the will and resources to play a major role in international peace and security must always take part in the Council's decision-making process. In addition, the Security Council must become more representative in order to better reflect today's world. The Security Council therefore needs to be expanded, both in its permanent and non-permanent categories, adding new members from both developing and developed countries.

It is our conviction that the role that Japan has played in the international community has provided us with sufficient basis for assuming the responsibilities of a permanent member of the Security Council. Japan also supports Brazil, Germany and India as legitimate candidates for permanent membership in the Security Council. In addition, we believe that Africa must be represented in the permanent membership of the Council.

For more than a decade, we have conducted discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In spite of that, we have not been able to arrive at a consensus among Member States on how to reform the Council. In December, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is to issue its report, which is expected to include proposals on Security Council reform. This time, it is incumbent upon us to conduct a serious discussion to seek ways to adjust the Security Council to the current realities of the world. Based on that discussion, we have to produce solid results regarding Security Council reform in the next year, which marks the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Nothing less than our wisdom, courage and public spirit are challenged, from the global viewpoint, in addressing this issue.

Facts speak more eloquently than rhetoric. In the Chairman's summary of the work of the Open-ended Working Group during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, it was stated that many speakers had expressed support for an increase in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. In the general debate in September, we were able to have a lively discussion on Council reform. By our own count, among the 151 Member States that referred to the need for Security Council reform, as many as 86 supported the expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Dozens more may have wished to express the same viewpoint, but were prevented from doing so by time constraints.

There are thus many nations that believe it is time to expand the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council. In contrast, only six countries supported the expansion of the Council in the non-permanent category only. These figures present a clear picture of what Member States desire in terms of Security Council reform.

There is, thus, substantial impetus among Member States in support of the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent categories of Security Council membership. We must translate this sentiment into the realization of true reform. Japan, along with many other like-minded Member States, will do its utmost to ensure that Security Council reform finally becomes a reality. In view of the substantial interest that many United Nations Members have in this issue, Japan would like to reserve the right to seek further discussion under agenda item 53 during the current session of the General Assembly.

I welcome the Council's voluntary efforts to improve its working methods in recent years. Among other improvements, the frequency of open briefings for non-Council members and of open debates allowing for statements by non-Council members has certainly

increased. I believe that such meetings contribute to the enhanced transparency of Security Council discussions. In order for the varied opinions of Member States to be reflected in the Security Council's discussions, it must provide non-member States with opportunities to participate in Council meetings, especially with regard to those matters in which they have major stakes.

Since the decisions of the Security Council are generally binding on all Member States, it is vital that the views of those States that are major stakeholders be reflected in the decision-making process. By so doing, the Security Council will be able to fulfil its responsibility of being accountable to Member States. It is Japan's hope that the Council will continue to look for means to involve those non-Council members with a vital interest in an issue under discussion more substantially in the Council's decision-making process. For the resolutions that have large budgetary implications on such activities as political missions and the consolidation of peace, in addition to those pertaining to peacekeeping operations, transparency as well as accountability needs to be ensured, particularly vis-à-vis major financial contributing countries.

A mechanism has been established for consultations between the Council and troop-contributing countries regarding specific peacekeeping operations. This mechanism needs to be expanded to include major financial contributors as well. In this regard, Japan considers the attendance by non-Council members at meetings of the Working Group of the Whole on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations to be a sign of progress, and looks forward to further efforts by the Security Council for the revitalization of this Group.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): The delegation of Guyana welcomes the opportunity to participate in the joint debate on item 11, "Report of the Security Council", and item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

My brief contribution today will focus on the question of Security Council reform. In so doing, I wish to pay tribute to the efforts made by the President of the General Assembly during its fifty-eighth session, Mr. Julian Hunte, to advance the process of Security Council reform and to impart fresh impetus to our deliberations.

Reform of the Security Council is a matter of fundamental importance to the future of the United Nations. As a small State, relying as we do on this collective system for our own peace and security, Guyana has sought the assurance that a new, reformed Council can provide reasonable protection for our sovereignty and territorial integrity as a matter of paramount importance.

It is now more than four years since world leaders resolved at the Millennium Summit to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. To date, their resolve is yet to be translated into definitive progress. While reform of the Council is arguably the most complex and difficult of decisions for the Organization, without minimizing the complexities involved, it is a decision we cannot escape. The alternative would be to maintain the status quo and risk the erosion of what the Secretary-General has described as the great strength of the United Nations — its legitimacy.

A loss of legitimacy will be detrimental to the United Nations and will undermine its effectiveness. However, with a Security Council that remains essentially wedded to the past, the risk of such a loss has grown. With the membership of the Organization expanding over the past half century, the Council has become increasingly less representative and increasingly more inequitable in its composition. The need for the Council to be adapted to contemporary realities can no longer be ignored.

After more than 10 years of discussion, positions on reform of the Council, including that of my own delegation, are now well known. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a growing inclination for change. Guyana remains steadfast in its view that the veto should be eliminated or at least significantly curtailed. Its limitation to matters under Chapter VII of the Charter could be an important first step in that regard. We have called for expansion of seats in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. In respect of new permanent members, my Government has so far pronounced its views only with respect to developing country aspirants. Guyana's Foreign Minister, Mr. Rudy Insanally, speaking in the general debate in September, stated at the 15th meeting:

> "After careful deliberation ... my Government has decided at this stage to support the aspirations of Brazil, India and an African State to permanent

> membership. We believe that their participation as developing States in the work of the Council will make that body more balanced, representative and, ultimately, more accountable to the Assembly for the maintenance of global peace and security."

Furthermore, we continue to hold to the view that in an expansion of the category of permanent members there should be no distinction with respect to rights and privileges between the current and new permanent members. Finally, my delegation also considers that any agreement reached on the reform of the Security Council should be subject to review after some time has elapsed, perhaps after 10 to 15 years.

In conclusion, it is clear that difficult compromises will need to be made if the Security Council is to become more representative, democratic, transparent and effective. Guyana shares the view that the year ahead could be an opportunity to take important decisions that will lead us to the early achievement of that goal. It is incumbent on Member States to summon the political will to move forward, taking due account of the various interests and concerns represented in this forum. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change may yet facilitate our task in this respect.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for this month, for his introduction of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. Taken as a whole, the information detailed in the report conveys a picture of the busy schedule that characterized the Council's work during the period.

My delegation would like to express its continued appreciation for the Council's focus on peacekeeping and its comprehensive approach to dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security, for which it has the primary responsibility. We are especially encouraged by the Council's sustained attention to conflict prevention, resolution and management. We urge it to continue to focus its attention on those issues, given the gravity, complexity and multifaceted nature of the problems and conflicts bedevilling various regions, and the sine qua non of peace and security in the quest to achieve sustainable development and stability. In that connection, we reiterate the need for the Council to continue to enhance cooperation with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other development bodies, given the well known interrelationship between peace, security and development.

My delegation also notes with appreciation the continued devotion of most of the Security Council's efforts to the African region. That has been evident in its various public meetings on several conflict situations on the continent, such as those in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, the establishment of United Nations missions in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and also its visiting mission to West Africa from 20 to 29 June 2004. It is our hope that such a devotion of time and effort will translate into concrete and appropriate solutions — coupled with the requisite political will and resources — to the conflicts plaguing the region. Also, as my delegation had occasion to point out last year, for visiting missions to have more impact they should be of longer duration and not involve visits to too many countries in one short trip.

Further, we welcome the continuing consultations and complementary initiatives that the Council has embarked on with regional and subregional institutions and we encourage the Council to stay on course. We are of the firm conviction that such partnerships between subregional and regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, could go a long way in helping to find lasting solutions to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Ghana, in its capacity as Chair of ECOWAS, would like to signal that organization's desire to cooperate with the international community to identify ways in which vital partnerships can prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in the West African region. The leadership and membership of the organization, while counting on beneficial collaboration with others, remain committed to their own projected constructive engagement.

I would like to recall that in earlier years, my delegation added its voice to the call for more information in the Security Council report concerning its missions to conflict areas to acquire firsthand information, if, as we thought it should, the Council was going to continue to rely on this system of Council missions. Permit me to congratulate the members of

the Security Council for improvements in that regard over the past two years, as the present report presents a much more detailed account of those visits.

Over the years, my delegation has been among those calling for further improvement in the report, procedures and working methods of the Security Council. We wish to commend the Council for keeping the new format that it has used in recent years, which is more compact and reader-friendly. However, there is much more to be done to improve upon the analytical framework. This year's report is again characterized by a dearth of the requisite information needed to effectively evaluate the Council's work. Similarly, the rather late publication of the report leaves much to be desired. This has been done in spite of concerns expressed previously by various delegations about the apparent contradiction between its contents, which remain little more than a simple outline of events with scanty analysis or explanations of the Council's actions and decisions, and the amount of time needed to process it. We would like to see this Charter obligation performed in a much more satisfactory manner.

We are encouraged by the number of open meetings and monthly briefings given by Presidents of the Council, as well as by the periodic wrap-up sessions, to which non-Member States have been invited. The open meetings should not be seen simply as a matter of "going through the motions". To be useful, the views expressed by Member States should be taken into account in the real decisions of the Council.

Elsewhere, we wish to commend the Council for its pivotal role in the global campaign against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Counter-Terrorism Committee has been an example of transparency, and we commend it for its efforts in that direction.

The Open-ended Working Group has been seized with the task of considering all aspects of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters since December 1993, with little progress with regard to the Cluster I issues. My delegation believes that the overdue reforms in terms of expansion, decision-making and periodic review of the Council could be resolved within a more democratic, cooperative, equitable and geographically representative framework, reflecting the kind of multilateralism that is required in contemporary times.

It remains an issue of concern that ten years after the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group so much substantial progress remains to be made. As the events of the past few years indicate, a comprehensive reform of the Council is crucial if its decisions are to continue to enjoy the support of the larger membership.

In this connection, we wholly subscribe to the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) statement on all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council, complemented by the African position on the same issue, as expressed in the Harare Declaration adopted by the Organization for African Unity in June 1997. Africa's claim to have at least two permanent seats on a rotational basis, even as it seeks an expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, should be adequately addressed, since it is the largest regional group in the Organization.

We also endorse the NAM proposal that a periodic review of the structure and functioning of the Security Council is necessary in order to enable it to respond better and more effectively to the new challenges in global relations, especially with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ghana shares the view that, on the Cluster II issues, increased transparency and improved working methods of the Security Council are crucial to ensure that body's accountability to the wider membership of the United Nations. We welcome the various improvements in the Council's working methods, including increased use of public meetings, consultations with regional organizations and the strengthening of consultations between troop-contributing countries, the Council and the Secretariat.

While commending these improvements, we must be quick to add that certain methods of the Council, like discrimination between Members and non-Members of the Council on time limits for statements, have often resulted in the unjustifiable exclusion of the wider membership from effectively articulating their views on specific projects pursued by the Council.

It is primarily through a restructuring of the Council along these lines that perceptions of selectivity in dealing with issues of international peace and

sustainable development can be avoided, and the causes of conflicts, whenever and wherever they occur, can be dealt with in an effective and impartial manner. In this regard, we look forward to the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change set up by the Secretary-General to examine the threats we face and to evaluate existing policies, processes and mechanisms. The recommendations the Panel submits must take into account the principles of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation, based on principles enshrined in the Charter, in order to enjoy the full confidence of Member States.

There is no gainsaying the fact that these have been very trying times for the United Nations in the area of peace and security. Our Organization is hard pressed to reassert its indisputable relevance in the present global context. The world desires a United Nations that is, and is seen to be an instrument for achieving common ends towards a just and stable world order.

To conclude, my delegation wishes to restate the imperative need for enhancing the credibility of the Council through substantive reform, guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation, so as to enable it to better carry out its Charter obligations.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Some time ago, in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, Uruguay suggested the Group consider new ideas for reform, for it had become clear that, after years of consultations and unsuccessful negotiations, no agreement would be reached if we persisted in working on the same basis, on the same proposals as had been proposed in 1993, when the Group began its work.

Despite genuine efforts on the part of successive Chairmen of the Group, to whom my delegation is deeply grateful, the negotiations have proved fruitless so far. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that, over the years, the objectives we have sought in this exercise have lost clarity and transparency. It is time to clearly define what the objectives are and to designate priorities among them.

The original declared purpose of the reform was to adjust the composition and working methods of the Security Council to fit current political realities in order to turn that body into an instrument better equipped to respond to current threats to international peace and security. To achieve this objective, we have said time and again, even ad nauseam, that we must make the Council a more efficient, democratic and representative body.

But, a second objective has now emerged. Some countries, willing to assume greater international responsibilities, would wish to be given a bigger role in the work of the Council and more influence in its decisions on international peace and security.

Uruguay acknowledges the legitimacy of both objectives. Naturally, we fully agree with the need to reform the structure and working methods of the Council to bring it in line with today's international realities. Furthermore, we understand the aspirations of those States that wish to assume greater responsibilities, those that have the will and that are in a position to do so, and that wish to increase their presence and participation in the Council. But we have to be very careful in choosing the means through which we intend to achieve these two objectives, since they might be incompatible, or one might interfere with the other.

The fact that we are simultaneously pursuing these two different and sometimes incompatible objectives has yielded a number of paradoxes and contradictions. For example, the first contradiction is that, while we do not stop repeating our intention to make the Council a more democratic body, some States that are working towards the second objective are seeking to increase the number of permanent members, which implies extending permanent membership to some new States and thereby extending to them the right of veto, which is the most undemocratic of all privileges.

The second contradiction would be that, while we stress the need for a more effective Security Council, some countries are proposing expansions that would increase membership to 30 or more; this would undoubtedly affect its ability to function effectively. Such a move would accentuate the deliberative character of the Council at the expense of its executive nature, thus protracting negotiations, making the path to agreements more difficult, and weakening the content of its decisions.

The third contradiction is that, while we speak of the urgent need to make the Council more representative, we have not formalized the one idea that would undoubtedly help us attain that objective and on which we all agree, namely to increase the number of non-permanent members. There are not, and have not been, any diverging views in that respect. Not a single country is opposed to increasing the number of non-permanent members. However, despite that general agreement, and despite the need to give the Council greater legitimacy and make it more representative, that idea has been held hostage to other, infinitely more controversial ideas.

That is all the more regrettable because, had we, at the beginning of consultations on this question, decided on an increase of, say, 10 new non-permanent members — a number that would probably be acceptable to all — over 50 countries would have participated in the work of the Council as non-permanent members over the past 10 years, in addition to the 50 that actually have done so.

We are pleased that some new ideas have been proposed lately that give us hope that we might finally achieve agreement on reforming the Council. Uruguay has always been very flexible on that issue. We are therefore ready to consider any proposals for reform that are designed not only to increase the democratic representativity of the Council but also to satisfy the aspirations of those States that are willing to shoulder greater responsibilities by increasing their presence on and participation in the Council, provided, of course, that there is no impact on either the democratic nature of the Council or the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States — the principle governing equitable representation and equal rights in international organizations.

With that understanding, we are ready to consider proposals that include more extended or frequent terms for some of the States that might take the new seats in an expanded Council. In any event, selection of new members should occur within the context of their respective regions, with due regard, of course — as set out in the provisions of Article 23 of the Charter relating to non-permanent members — for their contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security, and I refer here to contributions in the broadest sense of the term, not just financial.

In view of the difficulties that have prevented the attainment of a general agreement after 12 years of consultations, Uruguay believes that we must change the approach to the reform process and try to move forward in stages, gradually formalizing those reforms that are already agreed by all Members.

Uruguay will continue to participate in efforts to reform the Council. We will be flexible, but we will always remember that it is necessary to preserve intact the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we should like to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for the presentation, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, of the annual report on the activities of the Council.

The report that the Security Council submits to the General Assembly represents one of the most important sources of information for the Members of the Organization that do not participate in the decision-making process of that organ, as it helps them to know the status of different issues under consideration.

Mexico has stressed that this report should become increasingly substantial and analytical in nature in order to complement the efforts of other organs of the United Nations system.

The division of competencies among the principal organs of the United Nations, as provided for in the Charter, bestows concurrent powers on the Council and the General Assembly in the context of the preservation of international peace and security. There can be no doubt that those provisions give the Council special powers vis-à-vis those of the General Assembly.

Nevertheless, the Security Council has a responsibility to the whole of the membership of the United Nations in the exercise of its duties. Consequently, Members recognize the fact that the Security Council acts in their name when fulfilling the functions imposed on it by that responsibility. That is the source of the legitimacy and value of its decisions.

That responsibility also entails an obligation to provide substantive information about the measures that it has decided to take in order to maintain or restore peace and security, in accordance with Articles 24 and 15 of the Charter. Those two articles state that

the General Assembly will receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council.

Originally, both articles were proposed with the intention of giving the General Assembly the right to validate the actions of the Security Council. Because of opposition by the great Powers to that initiative, no clear commitment was made for the Security Council to be accountable to the General Assembly. The content of both provisions, which is certainly ambiguous, reflects that tension.

In practical terms, we can see that the result has been a rather pro forma, rather than substantive, compliance with the requirement that the Security Council submit reports to the General Assembly. That implies, in other words, the absence of an effective system of accountability. That shortcoming should be remedied in order to permit the adequate functioning of our collective security system.

Indeed, accountability is a powerful reminder of the shared responsibility and the cooperation that are required today to address the trans-national threats that we all face.

The importance of the responsibility conferred on an organ of limited composition such as the Security Council should be sufficient reason for the existence of an effective accountability system. The absence of such a system gives the impression that the members of the Security Council do not need the collaboration or cooperation of the rest of the membership, and that impedes the functioning of a collective security system.

As stated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico at the 10th meeting, during the general debate, Mexico favours "a regionally equitable and balanced enlargement of the number of elected members, based on modalities determined within the regional groups" and a guarantee of equal opportunities for all.

In that context, Mexico would favour proposals to increase the number of elected members, with longer mandates and with the possibility of immediate re-election, because we believe that this would strengthen accountability, which we consider indispensable to the work of the Security Council. A proposal of this kind, of course, would require amending Article 23 of the Charter.

Mexico views the reform of the Security Council as a necessary element, but one that is part of a larger process — that is, United Nations reform. An effective collective security system necessarily involves the strengthening of multilateralism and of the United Nations.

That is why Mexico believes that the reform of the Security Council should not be centred exclusively on increasing the number of its members. Resolving this issue, as important as it is, will not in itself help to tackle the great challenges and dilemmas faced by the Organization. No institution exists that can improve its performance and fulfil its mandate through a simple increase in its membership.

It is a fact that, for more than a decade, States have focused all their attention on the arguments regarding the Council's lack of representativity in its current composition, to such a point that it is believed that the collective security system will automatically be strengthened by an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council. Mexico is more convinced than ever that such a hypothesis is baseless.

We are faced with a paradox. Expanding the Security Council has the purpose of increasing its legitimacy and making it more representative and inclusive, so that an ever larger number of countries may participate and cooperate in the work of maintaining peace and security. But allocating seats to a limited number of new permanent members would result in decision-making being concentrated in fewer countries, not more. Such a concentration of power would become even greater if the new permanent members have veto power, which would obstruct decision-making gradually and diminish effective contribution by all Member States in the work of the Organization. We therefore agree with the thesis joint proposal by Australia, Canada and New Zealand that reform should contemplate an increase in non-permanent members so that opportunities may be expanded and not reduced.

In Mexico's view, the logical order of the discussion has been inverted. The recent tendency has been to first discuss the size and composition of the Council, postponing until later a discussion of the mechanisms and functions that the Council needs in order to effectively fulfil its mandate to preserve international peace and security. Any exercise aimed at reviewing the composition of the Security Council must first identify the substantive institutional changes

demanded by the emergence of new threats, if we want a collective security system that can meet current challenges.

It is clear that the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council have arrived at a point of saturation. Mexico believes that a new methodology should be designed to redirect the debate.

That is why, in his statement to the General Assembly at its 10th plenary meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico proposed the convening of a General Conference, under Article 109 of the Charter, in order to tackle each and every issue of the comprehensive reform of the Organization and to reach general agreement, as established by General Assembly resolution 53/30. Mexico will present, in the group of friends established for this purpose, proposals that are adequately far-reaching. The danger and global reach of these new threats constitute a powerful incentive to start this second major stage in the history of the United Nations.

Through a General Conference, Member States will have the opportunity to propose the changes and additions the United Nations needs in order to offer dynamic and effective responses to the great challenges to peace and development. In that way, the international community will be able to adopt formulas and mechanisms that are clearly relevant to fulfilling the objectives that we share in this Organization.

As a catalyst for these discussions, Mexico hopes that the elements to be set out in the forthcoming report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will be especially helpful, considering the high qualifications and experience of its members as well as the Panel's independent nature. Through this discussion, we will be in a position to reform the Security Council with the assurance that we have not been mistaken or, even worse, headed in the wrong direction.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the manner in which you are guiding this debate. My delegation also thanks Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for the current month, for introducing the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter.

Having studied the report of the Security Council, my delegation would like to offer the following observations. This agenda item on the report of the Security Council represents a valuable opportunity to consider in depth the work of the Council and to identify steps that should be taken to improve the working methods of that important organ.

Regarding the format of the report, my delegation welcomes the fact that this is a shorter document, containing an analytical introduction and a statistical section. However, efforts must continue to further improve the quality of the report of the Security Council. It still seems to be a compilation of decisions and resolutions that have been adopted, along with a rather factual account of the work of the body.

Regarding the working methods of the Council, I am pleased to see that during the reporting period, the Security Council held a large number of public meetings, in which many States participated. We welcome the increase in the number of public information meetings organized by the Secretariat. They provide non-members of the Council with an opportunity to be better informed on how certain matters before the Security Council are developing.

However, there is still much to be done to make the workings of the Council even more transparent for us as Member States. We remain concerned by the fact that members of the Council, particularly permanent members, are still able to unilaterally decide whether or not to organize public meetings, even when such meetings are requested by a country or a group of countries. Certain States calling into question the right of a country to participate in a public meeting on an item of great concern to it is not likely to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council.

Turning to the substance of the report of the Security Council, we see that the Council has not only responded to threats to international and regional peace and security, but has also dealt directly, firmly and with determination with a number of conflicts in Africa, inter alia by sending Council missions to the field. However, on the matter of the Middle East, the Council's efforts have not lived up to expectations. Frustration over the repeated inability of the Council to become more involved in a settlement of the question

of Palestine is a serious threat to the region and to the authority of the Security Council.

On another matter, the repeated but selective use of Chapter VII of the Charter is becoming rather confusing. There is a danger that this might discredit Chapter VII and, indeed, other chapters dealing with the maintenance of peace and security.

Regarding agenda item 53, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, Mr. President, I would first of all like to pay tribute to your predecessor, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, and to his two Co-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group for their outstanding contribution to our consideration of the item under discussion today. The crucial importance of reforming the Security Council has been reiterated annually since the Open-ended Working Group was established to deal with this matter in all its aspects in 1993. We are certainly well aware of the delicate and complex nature of this task, but we feel that we must achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council as soon as possible and that we must work even more intensively to that end.

There are new challenges in the world today, and so we must work together, within the United Nations, which is, after all, still the best framework for bringing together all of our efforts to ensure peace and security. It is also the source of international legality to which all States, without exception, must commit themselves. Faced with these challenges, the Security Council must immediately win back the trust of States and of world public opinion, not only by showing that it is able to effectively tackle the most difficult issues, but by becoming more widely representative of the international community as a whole and of the geopolitical realities of the world today.

The rich and varied proposals presented to us up until now contain the elements we need to act on those issues. However, since 1993, the Open-ended Working Group addressing that issue has not been able to draft a specific formula that is universally accepted.

Despite the initiative of President Hunte during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly to launch a lively discussion on six major themes relating to the general reform of the Security Council, the report before us is still only a simple compilation of ideas and proposals such as we have been receiving for many years.

That does not mean we do not recognize the progress that has been made in some aspects of Council reform. Indeed, the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group have enabled us, during those years, to identify a number of elements that are widely supported by the majority of States.

It is thus clear that we have certain elements that could be used as the foundation for a solution that is acceptable to all Member States. It is also clear that what is lacking is not ideas or proposals, but the necessary political will to accomplish the undertaking, as well as a specific commitment towards that end.

We are confident that you, Sir, will do your utmost to ensure that we move forward on the path before us.

Tunisia has participated in all sessions of the Working Group since its inception, and we continue to stand by our position, which we have often stated. My country believes the goal of the reform is to strengthen democratic and fair representation within the Council and to enhance its credibility and effectiveness.

The Council must reflect the political and economic realities of the world today. It must have the necessary democratic legitimacy to act on behalf of the international community in discharging its mandate under the Charter.

Its objectives can not be reached, unless there is an increase in both categories of membership — permanent and non-permanent. Equally important, the size of a restructured Council must allow for a genuine democratic representation of the developing countries.

In that context, Tunisia still supports the position of Africa, which has remained unchanged to this day and which is reflected clearly and unambiguously in the Harare Declaration of 4 June 1997 — adopted by the thirty-third Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity. The Declaration states that the number of members of the Council should be increased in both categories and that the African continent should be allocated two permanent seats. Those seats would be allocated by a decision of Africans themselves, in accordance with a system of rotation based on the current criteria of the African Union and subsequent elements that might improve upon those criteria. Africa will prove able, as

it always has been, to reach agreement on the allocation of seats allocated to it and will do so without undue haste.

The new permanent members must have the same privileges and powers as the current permanent members. The permanent members would be proposed by their respective regions and would be elected by the General Assembly.

Concerning the power of veto, my delegation endorses the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, that the veto should be limited to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. It goes without saying that a positive and constructive attitude concerning the question, on the part of the permanent members of the Council, would be crucial.

Lastly, the question of periodic review of the reformed Security Council is an indispensable element in the reform programme and must be taken seriously. The review would be envisaged as a confidence-building measure and would permit us to make any necessary adjustments in future. But even more importantly, it would be the mechanism whereby we would be able to evaluate the contribution of new members towards enhancing the effectiveness of the Council.

In conclusion, my delegation will continue to strongly support any proposal realistically dedicated to the representativeness, transparency or democratization of the Security Council. We trust the current debate in the Assembly on this important item will provide a meaningful contribution to the substantive debate that we will have, following publication of the report of the High-level Panel.

Mr. Ahamed (India): We welcome the opportunity to participate in the joint debate under agenda item 11: Report of the Security Council, and agenda item 53: Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

I join other speakers before me in thanking Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the report of the Council for the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004, to the General Assembly.

In the recent past, the Security Council has witnessed a substantial increase in the range of issues brought before it for its consideration. The end of the cold war and the advent of the twenty-first century have brought to the fore new threats and challenges to international peace and security. Some of the threats, represented by an increasing number of inter and intra-State conflicts, have evoked standard responses in the form of measures aimed at conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-building, transitional justice and post-conflict national reconciliation.

Others are less direct and, in their ambiguity, pose a greater danger to the international order. Those include international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction into the hands of non-State actors, international crime and narcotics. Those issues require a very different response, the mechanics of which we are still working out.

The Council has had to act decisively to deal with the new threats. They have placed enormous burdens on the existing system of collective security, sometimes straining it to the breaking point. The ability of the Council to act effectively and responsibly in the future will provide an important reassurance for the international community that its concerns in the area of security are being adequately addressed.

That calls not only for greater political will and unity on issues, but for the perception that the decisions taken by the Council largely reflect the concerns and aspirations of the general membership. A greater democratization of the existing order, increased transparency of its actions and the co-option of different ideas, interests and sensitivities will be essential in order for the endeavour to succeed over time.

Of late, the Security Council has increasingly appropriated legislative and treaty-making powers, as reflected in many of its decisions. Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004) were exceptional. But such actions should remain exceptions and not develop into norms. By increasingly resorting to resolutions and enforcement actions under Chapter VII of the Charter, even on matters that are better resolved through multilateral cooperation, the efforts of the Council can often become counter-productive. The Council can best succeed in implementing of its actions only when its decisions are taken through a process of consultations with the wider Membership.

My delegation views with concern the tendency of the Council to adopt decisions on issues that affect

the wider Membership of the United Nations without taking into account the views of the States concerned. We call upon the Council to ensure that it provides adequate opportunity for the views of the wider Membership to be heard on important issues, through transparent mechanisms such as open debates, before decisions on such issues are taken.

A majority of delegations have expressed concern over the lack of transparency in the work of the Council during the debate under this item at the last session of the General Assembly. Unfortunately, however, the Council appears to have paid very little attention to those concerns. We had specifically recommended that the Council, in the interest of democratizating its work, eliminate the selectivity currently applied with respect to participation under rule 37 of the Council's rules of procedure. Yet, in a recent instance, only one representative of a certain group of nations was permitted to express his views on an issue that, in our view, affected all States.

We have also spoken against the distinct lack of transparency in scheduling open and public meetings of the Council. With the exception of unforeseen developments, the Council has little reason not to disclose its full intentions for public and open events in its calendar, which is released at the beginning of every month. This inexplicable lack of transparency can only give rise to misgivings on the part of the wider membership and perpetuate an impression of the Council acting as an entity separate from the wider membership in both representation and intention.

Moreover, we have drawn attention in the past to the increased number of thematic debates in the Council on issues that very often fall within the purview of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. We have recommended that such instances be restricted in the interests of a more efficient use of the Council's time in dealing with the pressing issues and to ensure a more productive outcome when such thematic issues are of direct relevance to the Council's work. It is high time, in our view, that thematic debates be held in the General Assembly.

It is an inescapable conclusion that the Security Council will be truly effective and respected for its decisions only if it represents, and is seen to represent, the interests of the larger membership. A perusal of the items on the Council's agenda will reveal that the majority of issues under its consideration pertain to the developing world. Yet, developing countries account for less than half of the Council's membership during the best of times. This discrepancy becomes far more acute when the composition of the permanent membership is examined in isolation.

There is universal recognition of the critical need to undertake a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system in order to forge a stronger and more effective multilateralism. This reform cannot be limited or unidirectional, but must be inclusive and all-encompassing. It should include such elements as the revitalization of the General Assembly, strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, reform of the Secretariat machinery, reform of the planning and budgetary process and, above all, an expansion of the Security Council and reform of its working methods and decision-making processes. This would also make it possible to restore responsibility for the economic agenda of the United Nations, apart from questions of effectiveness and authority, to the General Assembly.

The Security Council, as currently configured, is not representative of contemporary realities. The Prime Minister of India touched upon this imbalance when he stated in his address to the Assembly on 23 September that "An overwhelming majority of the world's population cannot be excluded from an institution that today legislates on an increasing number of issues, with an ever-widening impact" (*A/59/PV.7*). There has been a four-fold increase in the membership of the United Nations since its inception in 1945, including a sharp increase in the number of developing countries. Though the provisions of the Charter give the General Assembly great authority and primacy, these have been eroded steadily over the past decade.

The permanent membership of the Security Council must have the critical mass to respond to the aspirations for democracy of Member States and to act accordingly. In other words, without the inclusion and presence of developing countries in an expanded Security Council, all other reform elements aimed at restoring the authority of the General Assembly would be in vain.

The fact that the vast majority of the general membership of the United Nations finds no representation in the permanent member category, and is inadequately represented in the non-permanent category, is an anomaly that needs to be urgently

rectified if the Council's decisions and actions are to be viewed as representative and legitimate. Additionally, new players from the developed world have emerged, and it is important that they find their place in a restructured Security Council.

It is imperative, therefore, that the Security Council be comprehensively reformed, including an expansion of its membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and the inclusion of both developing and developed countries as new permanent members. Any attempt to limit expansion solely to the non-permanent category would be to fail to establish the necessary representativeness within the Council. Nor would the creation of new quasi-permanent seats bring about equitable representation or enhance the Council's legitimacy, effectiveness or representativeness. Such partial and piecemeal attempts would only serve to preserve the present structure of the Council and would, in effect, erode its credibility even further. Instead of correcting, they would exacerbate current shortcomings in the Council's structure and work.

For its part, India has expressed its readiness to assume its responsibility as a global player in an expanded Security Council. We will work together with Brazil, Germany, Japan and a candidate from Africa in our quest to make the Security Council more representative, legitimate and effective.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Security Council is a body of the utmost importance which bears major responsibility for maintaining international peace and security — even more than the General Assembly.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is of the view that the deliberation of the current agenda items is an important occasion for the Security Council to review its annual work for international peace and security and to draw an appropriate lesson before the General Assembly, representing all United Nations Member States.

In that context, my delegation would like to present some views regarding the report of the Security Council, as well as the issue of the reform of the Security Council, before the current session.

First, it is important for the Security Council to take measures to eliminate the unilateralism pursued by the super-Power if it wishes to fulfil its mission for the maintenance of international peace and security, in line with the United Nations Charter. Unilateralism ruthlessly tramples down the most universal common interests of the international community, as it is a dangerous doctrine pursued by the super-Power to seek the establishment of a polar world order to subordinate all countries to its own interests.

For about a decade now, the Security Council has been deeply engaged in the question of Iraq, imposing inspections upon that country under the pretext of preventing the development of weapons of mass destruction on behalf of the interests of the super-Power. Yet, it failed to prevent the unilateral aggression against Iraq. Member States should draw a due lesson therefrom.

Secondly, the principle of impartiality should be observed in all activities of the Security Council. The Security Council should not become an organ dealing only with questions related to small and vulnerable countries and resorting to sanctions and the use of armed forces. Instead, the Security Council should make an issue of any country accountable for a breach of the peace, be it the super-Power or a country under the protection of the super-Power, and take relevant steps to assume with fairness its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Only when equity is ensured in the activities of the Security Council can it resolve disputes smoothly, make a substantial contribution to international peace and security and thus earn its credibility in the eyes of the international community.

Over 10 years have passed since the General Assembly began its deliberations on the question of Security Council reform. However, the prospects for Security Council reform are still gloomy, and that disheartens the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

Even a basic convergence on the simultaneous enlargement of the permanent and non-permanent membership has not been reached regarding the expansion of Security Council membership, which constitutes a core of Security Council reform. Though certain measures have been taken in terms of the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, substantial measures — such as that allowing the parties to conflicts to attend the relevant informal consultations — have not yet been taken.

That is due not to the lack of sufficient consultations or reasonable proposals, but to the fact that there are some Member States that do not have the political will to ensure the fair solution of the question of Security Council reform. Reality requires each Member country to take the position of putting aside its interests and giving priority to the common interests of the Member States in the deliberations on Security Council reform.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should like to see the General Assembly take steps at this session to make substantial progress towards the consideration of Security Council reform in 2005, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, after making a critical and objective analysis of the present situation.

In that regard, we deem it necessary that all Member States gear their deliberations on Security Council reform towards ensuring the fully equitable nature of the Security Council in the resolution of international disputes. The reform of the Security Council should not be undertaken just for show by simply increasing its membership or making some adjustments to its working methods. Instead, the reform should be a substantial one.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea believes that measures to eliminate egocentric unilateralism — which uses the Security Council whenever necessary and rejects it relentlessly when there is no such necessity — should constitute the core of reform.

As regards the enlargement of the composition of the Security Council, priority should be attached to ensuring the full representation of the developing countries in the expansion of the permanent and the non-permanent membership alike. It is essential for the democratization of the United Nations and the fair resolution of disputes that we ensure the full representation of the developing countries, which constitute the majority of the United Nations membership.

Given the gloomy prospects for reaching any agreement on the enlargement of the permanent membership, my delegation deems it realistic to increase, for the time being, the non-permanent membership. In so doing, we will serve the very purpose of reform by correcting the current imbalance in the composition of the Security Council and giving all Member States an equal opportunity to participate in the activities of the Security Council.

Unlike the enlargement of the non-permanent membership, the enlargement of the permanent membership requires greater perseverance on the part of the Member States, as it involves such sensitive and complicated issues as the criteria for new permanent members, the extension of the veto power and so on. That being so, one should not attempt to delay the progress of overall Security Council reform on the basis of the very issue of the enlargement of the permanent membership. Any attempt to do so is intended to counter genuine reform.

Finally, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to reiterate its stand that the reform of the Security Council should be undertaken on the basis of ensuring the full representation of Member States in favour of the developing countries, and expresses its expectation that practical steps will be taken towards that end.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council for this month, for submitting the report of the Security Council covering the period from August 2003 to July 2004.

I should like to reiterate on this occasion that the General Assembly's consideration of the Security Council's report reaffirms the Assembly's vital role in the consideration of all issues under the Charter and provides an opportunity for Member States to express their views on the work of the Security Council in fulfilling its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. For Syria, the report in part reflects the efforts that we made during our membership in the Council up until the end of last year.

Undoubtedly, over the reporting period the Security Council employed strenuous efforts in dealing with the issues before it. It gave priority to regaining stability in conflict areas around the world. Perhaps more than anything else, African issues enjoyed greater attention by the Council, which we are pleased to note.

The Council also increased the number of its open meetings to achieve greater transparency in its

work and to give other Member States the opportunity to express their views on the issues before it.

In that regard, it is regrettable that the Security Council has not been able to respond to the serious questions raised by the events and circumstances we witnessed over the reporting period and that have a bearing on its role and its effectiveness. Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian territories demonstrate the Council's inability at times to maintain international peace and security or to put an end to Israeli policies of aggression in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have been escalating owing to the impunity Israel enjoys within the Council.

Another matter of great concern is the Council's deviation from the principles of objectivity and its resort to double standards that could undermine its role, as well as the international legitimacy of the system we respect. At a time when the Council has failed to adopt important resolutions on issues that threaten international peace and security because such resolutions were needlessly vetoed, the Security Council has taken decisions that were surprising to many not only because they did not lie within its sphere of competence, but also because they represented interference in the internal affairs of a Member State, in contravention of the Charter. Such actions create an extremely dangerous precedent and raise serious questions as to the role and effectiveness of the Council. Arabs everywhere, their media and their intellectuals, seriously question the Security Council's ability to face up to the challenges and responsibilities before it. It is even more worrying as the Council tends to legislate on many issues in a manner that both contradicts its responsibilities and that interferes with the work of the General Assembly.

Syria's continued support of the United Nations and its agencies is well known, as is its call for United Nations resolutions to be implemented. However, that does not mean that we will not criticize mistakes when they are made and, particularly, when double standards are applied in dealing with United Nations resolutions, or when adopted resolutions go beyond its sphere of competence and responsibility. I believe that this lies at the heart of the issue of reform, which we are considering at present, in order to prevent the Organization from becoming a tool in the hands of greater Powers at the expense of the interests of lesser ones.

The main objective of reform of the United Nations is to promote its ability to face up to the new challenges and threats confronting it. Reform must take as its fundamental basis a total commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

We eagerly await the results of the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change established by the Secretary-General, which has been tasked with considering current and future threats to international peace and security as well as the situation of the principal organs of the United Nations and the introduction of proposals on enhancing their role. We look forward to participating in the discussions among Member States on the Panel's opinions and recommendations.

Reforming the Security Council and expanding its membership should be part and parcel of a joint, integrated project that takes into account equitable geographical representation and establishes transparency, accountability and democracy in the Council's working methods, including in the decision-making process. Expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories should also take into account the importance of equitable representation for developing countries and should not marginalize them in that process. Furthermore, it should also be in line with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement; it should be comprehensive and move away from divisiveness, and should reflect the role and viewpoints of regional groups. In that regard, we would like to reaffirm the position that the Arab Group has been reiterating for some time: the importance in any future reform of the Security Council of allocating a permanent seat and two non-permanent seats to Arab countries, which would be filled on a rotating basis, in accordance with the standards used in the Arab League. In that context, we would like to note that the current rotation period of the one non-permanent seat on the Council for the Arab countries is 30 years, which is unjust and unacceptable by any standards.

We look forward to the coming meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and we hope that the entire United Nations membership will be enthusiastic and responsible in undertaking reform of this Organization, which is the basis of international

democratic action to realize the aspirations of our peoples to security and stability.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): My delegation welcomes the annual report of the Security Council (A/59/2). I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the President of the Council, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for his clear and capable introduction of the report.

The document before us encompasses a wide range of issues dealt with by the Security Council during the reporting period. It has been prepared by the Secretariat in line with the revised format agreed upon by the Security Council in 2002 and contains an analytical summary of the work of the Council.

The Security Council maintained a busy agenda on Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan, as well as other important issues. Iraq remained a focus of the Council's attention during the period covered by the report. We commend Security Council efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations in assisting the people of Iraq to rebuild their country and create a stable and secure environment.

The situation in Afghanistan was another important item on the Council's agenda. The elections held on 9 October 2004 have become another landmark on the way to democracy and stability in Afghanistan. We continue to believe that the success of the political process in Afghanistan depends on the United Nations preserving its coordinating role in the settlement of the situation in that country.

Kazakhstan endorses the Security Council's continuing efforts to address ongoing conflicts. We believe that United Nations peacekeeping operations constitute one of the main elements in the maintenance of international peace and security. They are one of the key instruments available to the Security Council in the settlement of conflicts and disputes.

We take positive note of the fact that the Security Council has shifted its debate from the issues of peace and security to a much broader concept of security, attaching special importance to the questions of human rights, the rule of law, the role of the regional organizations, civil society, economic and social factors and HIV/AIDS.

We welcome the fact that in recent years the Security Council has taken measures to ensure its openness to non-members. Open thematic debates and interactive briefings are now held more frequently. That is a positive development in the work of the Council and we must encourage its efforts to take further steps in that direction.

The Secretary-General has repeatedly spoken about the need to address the issue of the Security Council's composition in order to ensure that its decisions command greater respect. The report of the Open-ended Working Group, which is under consideration today, states that, despite a limited success in the area of methods of work, significant progress has not been made on Security Council reform. It is noted that the impasse hindering the reform stems from the complex nature of the issue.

Kazakhstan has previously stated its position on that crucial subject. We share the perception of the urgency of a changed Security Council, which needs to be more representative, more legitimate, more transparent and more efficient. Kazakhstan holds the view that, in its current form, the Security Council no longer reflects the realities of our world. We believe that equitable representation of the Member States in the Security Council could strengthen its ability to effectively face the challenges of the twenty-first century and to play its role in the settlement of crisis situations.

The Council should be revitalized by the addition of new permanent and non-permanent members. We stand for the expansion of the Security Council on the basis of equitable geographic representation and respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States. Asia, Africa and Latin America should have a wider representation in the Security Council and should be directly involved in the search for solutions to the important problems facing the international community.

We believe that it is also necessary to increase the number of non-permanent members, taking due account of the interests of the Asian region. We also share the view that the "enemy State" clauses in the United Nations Charter are obsolete.

On the question of the reform of the Council, we look forward to the discussion, in a constructive manner, of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We believe that the Open-ended Working Group has to proceed with its work, taking into account the progress achieved at previous sessions of the General Assembly. We must

continue to make every effort to reach a comprehensive agreement encompassing all aspects of Security Council reform. My delegation is of the view that the work on cluster I and cluster II issues would have to continue in the Open-ended Working Group during this session.

We take this opportunity to thank the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, for his efforts to steer the work of the Group at the last session. We appreciate his initiative to stimulate an active discussion on substantive themes relating to the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

We look forward to working closely with the Security Council and to participating actively in all its efforts to meet the global need for peace.

Ms. Novotná (Slovakia): Allow me to convey my delegation's appreciation to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council, for his comprehensive introduction of the Council's report to the General Assembly. I also thank the members of the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing the report.

We are pleased to note that this year's annual report follows the new approach initiated in 2002, aimed at improving the report in both format and substance. My delegation welcomes the joint debate on the report of the Security Council and on the question of representation on the Council, which allows us to use our time more efficiently and effectively.

The comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for maintaining international peace and security, is vital to our Organization's success at a time when global challenges and problems require strong and truly international management. At this year's general debate, many world leaders addressed the reform of the Security Council. Their views were mostly focused on the Council's membership expansion.

Security Council reform is also one of the issues being considered by the High-level Panel established by Secretary-General Kofi Annan last year. The report of the Panel will be available before the end of this year and we sincerely hope that it will present meaningful suggestions for a long-term Security Council overhaul that will benefit the entire United Nations and the international community.

It is clear that the Security Council must become more democratic, more consistent, more effective and more open. It must function less as a geopolitical instrument of major Powers and more as a transparent and legitimate organ accountable to the wider membership of the United Nations.

There is near-universal agreement that the Security Council should be enlarged in order to become more diverse and more representative of various regions and countries of different sizes. Increased membership would enhance the Council's capacity to be a credible source of international peace, security and justice. That would lead to more active support for its decisions, as well as greater participation in operations arising from its decisions. Ultimately, it could encourage responsible leadership from countries of the world's more volatile regions.

Slovakia supports the idea that the Council could well be expanded in due course to the maximum number of 25, with a more equitable geographical and regional distribution, without limiting its effectiveness and efficiency. Like several other Member States, Slovakia believes that the Security Council should be enlarged in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Such an approach would ensure the Council's dynamic adaptation to the evolving international realities that have arisen since 1945, when the United Nations mandate was drawn up.

The present membership structure is clearly unbalanced and does not truly reflect the membership of the United Nations. The four fifths of humankind that live in the developing countries have only one vote among the permanent members. It seems only appropriate that the enlargement in the permanent category should include countries of the global South.

Only such an expansion could rectify the existing imbalance in the composition of the Council. We duly note that several developing and industrialized countries that possess political and economic potential have staked a claim to permanent membership. Slovakia maintains the position that an enlarged Security Council should also include Germany and Japan as new permanent members.

Since 1990, the Security Council has become a more effective engine for mobilizing the world community to repel aggression, manage conflicts and

maintain international peace and security. The Council has dramatically increased its activities with regard to both peacekeeping missions and the adoption of coercive measures. It has branched into many new areas far beyond the traditional definitions of peace and security.

In addition to changing the composition of the Security Council, we must enhance its working methods. Some progress has already been made towards making the work of the Security Council more transparent. A number of decisions have been taken by the Council itself with regard to the reform of its procedures in an effort to increase and promote the transparency of the Council's deliberative process and its accountability to the wider membership. Other proposals and initiatives have been introduced to increase efficiency.

For example, direct meetings are now being held between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, allowing the latter to convey their opinions directly to the Council and contribute to the creation and the mandates of peacekeeping operations. In addition, the improved quality of the Council's reporting and the holding of more frequent open meetings and debates should also be mentioned.

It is widely accepted that the cooperative relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council should be further promoted in the discharge of the function of the maintenance of international peace and security. Their mandates, as spelled out in the Charter, establish the constitutional balance between the two main United Nations bodies. In this respect, we welcome the adoption of resolution 58/126, which provides for an expanded coordination mechanism between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

I should like briefly to touch upon the question of the veto. Many Member States view the veto privilege as an anachronism that is responsible for much of the Security Council's undemocratic and ineffective procedure. Slovakia shares the view that the right of veto should no longer be the prerogative of a few States. It is, however, unrealistic to assume that the veto power will change precipitously. The shift away from veto prerogatives, which are limited to a number of great Powers, should occur gradually but systematically.

The reform of the United Nations is not an easy process. The core of the reform remains, without doubt, the reform of its most powerful organ, which enjoys unique authority under the Charter and international law. Despite the major obstacles to be overcome, we should not relent in our efforts to achieve meaningful reform of the Security Council, so that it can continue to play an effective role as the focal point for the resolution of the conflicts of our time.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): At the outset, my delegation would like to express our appreciation to Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for having introduced the report of the Security Council this morning. We also appreciate the work and efforts of the Secretariat in compiling the report, contained in document A/59/2. The report does, indeed, provide a comprehensive picture of the work undertaken by the Security Council during the previous session.

My delegation also welcomes the organization of open consultations and briefings for all Member States, and we look forward to the future organization of such meetings, which play an important role in imparting information to and promoting a better understanding of the work of the Security Council among all States members of the General Assembly. My delegation believes that such open consultations allow an opportunity for States that are not members of the Security Council to contribute to the decision-making process so that the Security Council can make more responsive and relevant decisions. To this end, such dialogues and consultations, as well as the distribution of the Security Council's programme of work, are very much encouraged.

Last week, my delegation had the pleasure of addressing the Assembly under agenda items 52 and 54, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly" and "Strengthening of the United Nations system", respectively. Today, my delegation is pleased to address agenda item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". My delegation believes that the reform of the United Nations must be undertaken in a holistic manner. Having already spoken about the reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly, therefore, the next logical step is to share my delegation's views on the reform of the Security Council.

We must face the fact that there are many changes taking place in the world — changes that need a more responsive and democratic mechanism if they are to be properly addressed at both the national and the international levels. My delegation is of the view that a reformed Security Council with more equitable geographical representation and an expanded membership is, indeed, required if the Council is to respond effectively and efficiently to the new changes that we are talking about.

To this end, my delegation welcomes the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, contained in document A/58/47, which recommends that discussions on the topic be continued at the current session of the General Assembly. My delegation would also like to congratulate Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, for his dedication and his tireless efforts in reviving and sustaining the momentum of the reform of the Security Council, thereby providing a foundation for our deliberations today and during the rest of the session. My delegation pledges its full support and active participation in the reform process of the Organization, including the Security Council.

The convening by the Working Group of three formal meetings, as well as of nine rounds of informal consultations, is, indeed, an impressive record. However, the number of consultation sessions held is not as important as the progress that has been made. My delegation welcomes the move away from consideration of the two clusters to consideration of five pertinent topics, namely, the size of an enlarged Security Council, the question of regional representation, the criteria for membership, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and accountability.

My delegation also welcomes additional discussion on the use of the veto and looks forward to participating in the consideration of any other issues that might be relevant to the reform of the Security Council, such as the meetings of the Council with troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat; the measures to ensure further transparency of the Council; the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly; and the proper scope of the role of the Council in setting international legal norms. Such an approach has thus far provided us with stimulating discussions, as well as encouraging results.

In principle, my delegation is of the opinion that the current world climate warrants an expansion of the Security Council through an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, given that the United Nations membership has expanded almost fourfold since the Organization's inception in 1945. However, the expansion of the Council should also take into account issues of manageability and efficiency. The 191 Members of the Organization need greater representation in the Security Council. But such representation needs to be equitably distributed in the geographical allocations of Member States, including both developed and developing countries, so as to reflect the world in microcosm.

In the light of the existing diversified opinions on how the membership of the Security Council should be expanded, my delegation wishes to echo the statement made by the Thai Foreign Minister during the general debate two weeks ago, calling for priority to be given to the establishment of a set of relevant criteria for membership before considering the admission thereto by names or number. In other words, before membership is granted, new members of the Security Council must fulfil a certain established set of criteria — for example, the ability and the commitment to discharge their responsibilities in safeguarding international peace and security and in upholding the Council's significant authority, which must be exercised with the utmost care and responsibility. Given that the primary role of the Security Council is to safeguard global peace and security, the ability to perform that function to any degree — for example, by contributing troops and financial resources for peace operations — could become an essential factor.

In this era of United Nations reform, the Security Council must connect more significantly with the rest of the United Nations. Therefore, greater interaction, coordination and coherence between and among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must be achieved. Regular meetings between the Presidents of those organs could provide a good starting point.

Moreover, such meetings should also provide opportunities to address in a unified manner a wider range of issues, such as post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction and development, the latter of

which is seen as the best means of conflict prevention and thus is unquestionably relevant to issues related to world peace and security. The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly on budgetary questions should be re-examined and further strengthened, as the decisions taken by the Council may impose budgetary obligations on and thus financially affect all members of the Assembly.

At any rate, the expansion of the Security Council must not be executed at the expense of transparency and accountability. The Council should both represent and be responsive to the views and the will of the international community. Decision-making processes should also be made transparent.

Finally, my delegation would like to touch upon the issue of the veto power. As shown in annex III of the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/58/47), since the inception of the Security Council, more than 200 of its decisions have been vetoed, mostly by the single negative vote of a permanent member. That practice should be reconsidered in the light of the proposed expansion of the membership of the Council. In that context, a new approach aimed at bringing more credibility and legitimacy to the use of the veto power may need to be introduced.

The report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will soon be completed. My delegation looks forward to its guidance and its suggestions for further reform of the United Nations system. However, the report should not delay Member States in formulating ideas and innovative ways to improve the Security Council. Additionally, as the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations is fast approaching, a revitalized, reformed and responsive Security Council, as well as the United Nations as a whole, could herald a welcoming beginning for the seventh decade of this body.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): The report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly is a useful instrument. However, we must continue the efforts aimed at making it more analytical.

This report gives us the opportunity to take a look at the progress of the work of the Security Council and its relations with the General Assembly. In fact, the Council's increasing role in new areas, the increase in thematic debates and the legislative trend we have noted recently are all developments that raise, in new terms, the question of the Security Council's interaction with the General Assembly and with the Economic and Social Council. That question deserves genuine reflection. We hope that the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change established by the Secretary-General will enable us to take a step back and devote ourselves to such reflection.

I now turn to the question of reform of the Security Council. For many years, we have reiterated that the Council's current composition no longer corresponds to today's geopolitical realities. We cannot continue to ignore that evidence; the very credibility and legitimacy of the Council are at stake. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on this question is at an impasse.

In addition, my delegation awaits with great interest the proposals to be made by the High-level Panel on this subject. In fact, the Panel, by approaching the question of Council reform in a broader context, should shed appropriate and new light on this debate. We will therefore examine these proposals — together with the recommendations that the Secretary-General wishes to make on the basis of the Panel's report — attentively and in an open and constructive spirit.

Belgium favours balanced and realistic reform that would respond to the wishes of a vast majority of Member States — reform that would strengthen the representativity and thus the legitimacy of the Security Council, but without compromising its effectiveness. Together with a group of countries that agree on such an approach, my delegation has in the past introduced pragmatic proposals aimed at expanding the two categories of Council membership. We have also formulated proposals aimed at limiting the exercise of the right of the veto. We remain convinced that those are the parameters necessary to arrive at a compromise solution.

In fact, we believe it essential that States that are actors on the international scene and have the necessary diplomatic, financial and military capacity to support actions undertaken by the Security Council should be able to participate in that forum. Moreover, Belgium has always advocated expansion that would respect regional balances. In that respect, we believe we should consider the issue of greater involvement by regional organizations, directly or indirectly, in the work of the Council. In particular, the dynamic of

European construction towards a truly common foreign policy should prompt us to think about European Union representation within the Security Council.

Precisely because geopolitical realities are constantly changing, we also feel that it would be appropriate to provide for the periodic review of the Council's composition — every 10 to 15 years, for example.

I can assure you, Mr. President, that my delegation will continue to participate actively in the discussions and the work on reform of the Security Council in the same constructive spirit that has inspired our previous proposals. You can count on our full support in that undertaking.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation welcomes the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. We should like to thank the President of the Council, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, for his clear and comprehensive introduction of the report.

The report gives us an overall picture of the work the Council has done in the past year in discharging its mandate, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. This is a good opportunity for Member States to review and assess the Council's work and to present their observations on this matter.

My country also welcomes the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. This is an important opportunity for us, as Member States of the Organization, to give our views on this important matter.

The Security Council report is an important document, and it is of great interest to delegations, which eagerly await its publication every year. It gives a full account of measures taken by the Council over the past year. It also gives us important statistical information that serves as a reference for delegations, as well as for researchers and those who take an interest in the work of the Security Council and the General Assembly as a whole.

Although the report is comprehensive, it lacks ample explanation and analysis of the Council's work. It contains documents and resolutions that have been issued and that we have seen; what is needed is an evaluation of the successes and the failures of the Council, the impediments it has encountered, and proposals to improve its performance.

There is one thing that we have often said in the past, which is that the report comes out late every year. It comes out just a few days before it is discussed by the General Assembly, thus creating difficulties for us, as we have only a short time to study it.

The Council reports to the Assembly under Article 24 of the Charter, and it has to comply fully and faithfully with the provisions of this Article, as must the Secretariat. The Council is one of the Organization's principal organs, and all Members must be kept informed of its activities, as it acts on behalf of the membership and its decisions affect their interests and their obligations.

Accordingly, we all need to study the report, and with enough time, so that we can submit our views on it. We want to stress the importance of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This relationship is governed by many Charter articles. The relations between the two bodies have been considered in depth over the past decade during discussions on Council reform. Some agreed ideas and observations have emerged, such as how to enhance and improve the Council's annual report and other reports to the Assembly.

Regular monthly consultations have been held between the Presidents of the Council and the Assembly and the Secretary-General. Under General Assembly resolution 58/126, the Assembly reviewed the matter regarding the revitalization of the work of the Assembly and efforts to improve relations between these two organs. We want to stress how important it is to consolidate the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This means that the Council must have greater transparency in its work and in its working methods.

Many have noted that the Council is beginning to consider issues that do not fall within its purview but rather within that of the General Assembly. It has begun to broaden its mandate, mainly the maintenance of international peace and security, by taking up issues such as poverty, children, children and armed conflict, the rule of law and human rights. These are issues that fall within the mandate of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Some Members have

interpreted the transfer of issues from the Assembly to the Council as due to the latter's desire to broaden its activities and the Assembly's inability to deal effectively with such issues. The Assembly must be more active and effective and tackle these issues in a new spirit in order to restore the proper balance between the two organs, so that each can exercise its specific powers under the United Nations Charter.

My delegation would like to pay tribute to the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. My delegation appreciates what the Working Group has done. We also welcome the ideas and proposals it has offered. We welcome any progress in this area, slow as the progress may have been. Since its founding in 1993, the Working Group has dealt with a number of controversial issues, although it has not yet arrived at specific proposals on the reforms to be undertaken to improve the working methods of the Council, its composition and the number of its members. Nevertheless, the Working Group is the forum that every Member goes to in order to discuss ways that would lead to the required reform.

We trust that the Group's work will be crowned with success so that this and other issues can be resolved. The question of Security Council reform has become a fundamental prerequisite, as has improvement in its working methods and structure. This has been a priority and one of the most discussed issues within the United Nations and one of the major concerns of the membership. In the last few years, the Working Group's discussions have taken place within this context. There has been a significant increase in United Nations membership, and the question of the equitable representation of States in the Council has become a fundamental requirement. Account must be taken of this increase in United Nations membership when discussing the increase in the membership of the Council.

There are more items on the agenda as well, and special attention and redoubled efforts must be devoted to this problem. Equitable representation is needed in the Council, taking into account the interests of all Member States.

We welcome improvement in the working methods and increased transparency of the Council. We also welcome its greater number of open meetings, discussions and public briefings, which have enabled Member States to learn more about the Council's work and to follow its discussions. This improvement in its working methods should prompt us to exert further efforts in this area. We need the cooperation of one and all in order to reach our goal, which is to ensure that the Security Council represents the interests of all Member States and that all States requesting its assistance and protection can have recourse to it in its role as a defender of the law and a promoter of justice.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): I wish to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom for introducing the Security Council's report in his capacity as President of the Council.

The past year has again raised a wide range of issues that the Council is taking up in exercising its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation continues to believe that this also represents a stark reminder of the need to adapt the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent composition and methods of work, including the right of veto, if it is to cope efficiently with the geopolitical realities of the world today. In advocating an increase in the non-permanent seats on the Council, let me reiterate that an additional non-permanent seat should be allocated to the Eastern-European region, alongside those to be allocated to the groups of African, Asian and Latin American and Caribbean States.

Notwithstanding the continuing lack of progress within the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council on the issue of increased Council membership, we wish to commend the innovative efforts to foster progress in its discussions made by the previous President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, and both Vice-Chairpersons of the Working Group, Ambassador Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Ambassador Wenaweser of Liechtenstein. The practice of focusing our discussions on separate points and of introducing the reference and historical-review papers was a useful one in terms of better structuring ongoing discussions over the past decade.

However, we cannot afford to spend another decade going through the same discussions. Last year,

Slovenia wholeheartedly welcomed the establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and we anticipate with great interest the report of the Panel to be submitted to the Secretary-General later this year, as well as the recommendations to emanate from it. We expect the Panel and the consequent recommendations to address a range of issues to better enable the Organization, including the Security Council, to collectively address today's threats and challenges in a globalized world. We anticipate the issue of Security Council enlargement to represent part of the recommendations. At the same time, that issue alone should not overshadow other issues of importance to enabling the strengthened Organization to respond effectively to crisis situations and crisis issues, thereby strengthening effective multilateralism and the international order based on international law. Slovenia will engage constructively in addressing all recommendations emanating from the work of the Panel.

Let me also take this opportunity to express the view of my delegation that greater opportunities need to be provided to the general United Nations membership to participate in the Council's deliberations, particularly when those result in its "semi-legislative" decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter, binding on all United Nations Members. Greater openness to general views in such decision-making processes will increase the legitimacy of the Council. Having said that, we continue to believe that treaty-making continues to be the principal source of obligations binding on States.

The complexity of threats to world peace, security and the well-being of the populations of various regions of the globe demands a strengthening of the cooperation between various regional organizations and the United Nations. Chapter VIII of the Charter provides a framework for such cooperation that could be further exploited. On that issue, I wish to concur with the statement made by Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa this morning. Slovenia welcomes the trend demonstrated over the past year towards an intensification of partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations. Next year, Slovenia will assume the presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and, in that capacity, will strive to further enhance cooperation between the United Nations, its Security Council and the OSCE, as well as other regional organizations, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I would like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry for his eloquent introduction of the report of the Security Council. My delegation also commends the excellent work of the Secretariat in compiling that invaluable source of reference and information. That presentation is a welcome continuation of the Security Council's dialogue with the General Assembly on the discharge of its duties pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter. Our dialogue will enhance the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council in promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter.

An adequate flow of information towards non-members is a necessary prerequisite to assessing how the Council is dealing with political issues. It should therefore be strengthened. The briefings of the respective presidencies and the information they make available via their homepages have been further improved. The increase in public meetings underlines the willingness of the Council to take into account the views of Member States.

Austria, as a traditional provider of peacekeeping troops, would welcome further efforts of the Council to enhance the dialogue with troop-contributing countries. Cooperation between the Council and the troop-contributing countries at an early stage is essential when new mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions are being considered.

My Government warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's pledge to make the strengthening of the rule of law a priority for the remainder of his tenure. In that respect, and in view of the unique role and responsibility of the Security Council, the Austrian Foreign Minister launched a dialogue on the role and functions of the Security Council in the strengthening of an international system based on the rule of law. As a first step, Austria will convene a panel on the question "The Security Council as world legislator?" on 4 November, during this year's International Law Week at the United Nations in New York. The panel, which is being organized in cooperation with New York University, is designed to enhance the dialogue between theory and practice on that important topic.

The United Nations has played a central role in Austria's foreign policy ever since my country became a Member in 1955. We therefore attach great value to

the legitimacy and efficient functioning of the Organization and support a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Austria, like the vast majority of Member States, is concerned about the growing gap between the Council's current composition, on the one hand, and the changing political, economic and social reality of the community of nations, on the other. It is essential to enlarge and balance the membership of the Security Council, as well as to increase its transparency. We must ensure that the Security Council is a body that truly reflects the diversity of the world's cultures and regions by an improved representation of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Austria highly appreciates the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and is very much looking forward to its report. Austria is confident that that report will give a new and innovative impetus to the reform debate.

During this session's general debate a clear majority of delegations advocated reform of the Security Council. Although the specific positions still diverge significantly, there seems to be a gathering momentum for substantive reform. That momentum, together with the fresh impetus that we expect will be generated by the report of the High-level Panel, is a unique opportunity for change. We must not miss that opportunity.

Mr. Capelle (Marshall Islands): I am honoured to participate in this debate on behalf of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Like many other Member States that have spoken before me today, the Marshall Islands sees an urgent need for the reform of the working methods and membership of the Security Council. In order for the decisions of the Council to garner the respect and support of the international community, the working methods of the Council must become more transparent and inclusive, and the membership must be made more representative. The Marshall Islands reiterates its support for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership. We support the allocation of a new permanent seat to Japan, and we also believe that priority must be given to increasing the representation of developing countries on the Council. Those reforms are crucial if the Council is to retain its legitimacy in light of the political, economic and geographic realities of the world today.

My delegation looks forward to the discussions that will take place within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group later this session. We hope that substantial progress will be made and that the Working Group will agree on recommendations that will push the reform process forward in a meaningful way.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.